



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE POSTEXILIC HISTORY OF ISRAEL. XII.

By Professor WILLIS J. BEECHER, D. D.,

Auburn Theol. Seminary, Auburn, N. Y.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INSTITUTIONS AND THE PRODUCTION
OF LITERATURE, FROM THE MACCABAEAN TIMES
TO THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

Sources.—Our information on the subject in hand is derived mainly from three sources: first, the direct statements found in Josephus, in the rabbinical and patristic books, and perhaps in other writings; second, the look backward from the situation existing in New Testament times; third, the glimpses given in the extant literature and the other monuments of the period itself.

It should be recognized that the second of these three sources is most important. In Philo and elsewhere, we have a vivid picture of Hellenistic Judaism, as it existed at the opening of the Christian era. In the New Testament, especially, but also very fully in Josephus and other writers, we have minute and trustworthy pictures of the condition of the Jews, in Palestine and out of it, during the first half century of that era. In the history of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the events preceding that event, as given by Josephus and others, we see what the Jewish spirit became, as imperial Rome grew more and more corrupt, and the virus of that corruption affected both the governing and the governed classes in Judaea. All these things had their antecedents in the institutions that developed under the Maccabees and their immediate successors. From the results we are enabled to infer much, indeed to infer more than we know from other sources of information, in regard to the character of these antecedents.

The literature that concerns itself with the condition of

the Jews in the time of Jesus and the times just before and after is very abundant, and remarkably able. Among recent works, perhaps Edersheim's *Life of Christ* and Schürer's "*The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*" have attracted most attention. Schürer's work, especially, is admirable for the ripeness and clearness with which it presents the subject, and for the fullness of its references and citations. It seems to me, moreover, to be in a high degree trustworthy, although some of its positions are vitiated by the mistaken postulates it follows, in the matters of Pentateuchal Criticism and pre-exilian history.

In two particular points, the current treatments of the subject, Schürer's in a less degree than most others, fail of being scientific: they are chronologically confused, and they explain the clearer facts by the more obscure, instead of the reverse. The times when the Mishna was written were separated from the times of Jesus by a century and a half of time, including, besides lesser events, two complete revolutions for Palestinian Israel, and the entire early history of Christianity. A similar wide and eventful interval separates the times of Christ from those of the Maccabees, and an interval wider and hardly less eventful separates the Maccabees from the times of Ezra. In the circumstances, it is hardly fair to apply the Talmudic, or even the Josephan descriptions to the institutions of the earlier times as if they were contemporaneous. Further, the main purpose of studies of this sort has usually been to throw light upon the New Testament. This is laudable, but sometimes leads to peculiar results. As a rule, the statements of the New Testament, together with what Josephus says in regard to the events of his own times, are the clearest and most trustworthy statements we have concerning those times. If, instead of taking these statements at their natural value, we force upon them interpretations drawn from what we suppose we have learned from the rabbinical or the Hellenistic writings, we may find that we have shed darkness upon them, instead of light.

The holy land, and the temple.—In New Testament times, there were influential Jewish communities in every part of the known world. Apparently they were animated by a feel-

ing of loyalty to Palestine and the temple. At the annual feasts in Jerusalem there were not only multitudes from the neighboring regions, but visitors "from every nation under heaven," Acts 5. Jews (and sometimes Gentiles also) from different parts of the earth made rich gifts to the temple. Their good will was in many ways an advantage to Jerusalem and Palestine. When Jesus lived, the country seems to have been crowded with a well to do population; and its prosperity, in spite of the succession of slaughters and spoliations by which it had been affected, was in no small degree due to the advantages which it had enjoyed from being regarded by Jews everywhere as their holy land.

Perhaps this state of things culminated during the first half century of the Christian era. Something of it had existed from the time of Zerubbabel. In the Maccabæan times, probably, the sympathy of Jews everywhere had been especially aroused in behalf of their Palestinian compatriots, and their interest had grown rapidly from that time. There were local differences among the Jews of different parts of the world; the Alexandrian Hellenists, in particular, differed greatly from their brethren in Palestine; yet in the main their institutions were everywhere the same. Wherever the Apostles and their co-laborers went, they found synagogues, zeal for the law, customs of worship, reverence for the land of their fathers and for the sacred city.

The development of Tanaism.—The most noteworthy feature of the Jewish spirit, in the time of Jesus, is that represented in the scribes, lawyers, and Pharisees, in Palestine; in the Judaizing spirit in the early Christian church; and in some form or other everywhere where Jews lived. Most of the Palestinian scribes and students of the law were Pharisees, though perhaps not all of them. We are pretty familiar with the antagonisms that arose between Jesus and the men of this spirit; but we should not overlook the fact that, in the main, their platform of religious and moral doctrine was the same with that of Jesus. The great virtue of pharisaism was its reverence for the written law; its great vice was exhibited in its attempt to reduce the teachings of the law to mechanical formulas.

When did this spirit begin to display itself? The recognition of the claims of the written law was magnified in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. Traces of the mechanical interpretation of the law appear in the times of Ptolemy Lagus, who seems to be represented as taking Jerusalem on the Sabbath, because the Jews deemed it unlawful to fight on that day, *Jos. Ant.* XII. i., *Cont. Ap.* i. 22. The same interpretation of the Sabbath appears at the beginning of the Maccabæan struggle, though this was changed, later, to an interpretation that permitted them to fight, if attacked, XII. vi. 2; XIV. iv. 3. During the earlier Maccabæan wars, a class of men called Asidæans, *Chasidim*, make themselves prominent on the patriot side,* *1 Mac.* 2: 42; 7: 13; *2 Mac.* 14: 6, cf. *Ps.* 79: 2; 97: 10; 132: 9, etc. We have no detailed information concerning these men, but they were men devoted to the law, and were capable of being distinguished as a class by themselves, and of acting together. Probably they are to be regarded as the predecessors of the Pharisees.

The Pharisees are first mentioned as existing in the high-priesthood of Jonathan the Maccabee, 153-143 B. C. From this time, they figure conspicuously in the history. The best way to gain information concerning them is to read, first, the New Testament passages that mention them, and then *Jos. Life* 2, 38; *Ant.* XIII. v. 9; x. 5, 6; xvi. 2; XVII. ii., iii.; XVIII. i.; *Wars.* I. v.: II. viii.

Synagogues and schools.—To the spirit represented by the Pharisees, Israel largely owed, in the time of Jesus, its widespread system of synagogues and schools. Here chronological data are lacking. Philo and the New Testament writers find synagogues in existence everywhere, and Philo and Josephus apparently trace them back to Moses, *Jos. Cont. Ap.* ii, 18, Philo *Life of Moses* iii. 27, cf. *Against Flaccus* vi. sq., *On Ambassadors* xx. sq. Evidently, they were old institutions at the opening of the Christian era. Advanced schools, wherein distinguished scribes taught the law to their disciples, were certainly in existence before the time of Christ. Later than these came the attempt to have, in every Jewish commu-

* They are always on the patriot side. In the matter of accepting Alcimus, they are simply deceived, with their fellow patriots, for a while, *1 Mac.* 7: 13.

nity, schools where boys should be taught to read the law. Schürer is doubtless correct in saying that the primary schools were existing, though not universally, when Jesus was born. There is no improbability in the idea that he passed through the experiences of a schoolboy. At all events, he had somehow become qualified to read the Hebrew Scriptures, in the synagogue, Luke 4: 16. The New Testament writings give the impression that, in most Jewish communities, both in and out of Palestine, men thus qualified were somewhat plenty.

When did the synagogues and the schools arise? The general analogies of history justify the presumption that they originated in a group, first the synagogue, then the higher school, then the school for boys; first the parish church, then the higher school, and then the common school. The common statement in the matter is, I think, that pre-exilian history is silent concerning the synagogue, but that it can be traced to the Maccabæan times, and presumptively back, perhaps to Ezra. But is the pre-exilian history any more silent in the matter than is the postexilian history up to some time later than the Maccabees? At present, I am not qualified to make a sweeping assertion in answer to this question. But Josephus, Philo, and the Midrash testify to the pre-exilian existence of the Synagogue (see above, and Edersheim's *Life of Jesus*, book 2, chap. 10); and in Ezekiel and the various pre-exilian books, we have occasional notices of religious gatherings on the Sabbath, not confined exclusively to the temple, and also of places for religious gathering and instruction, e. g., Ezek. 46: 3; Hos. 2: 13 (11); 2 Kgs. 4: 23 and context; 1 Sam. 19; 18-24, and very many other passages that might be grouped with these. It may readily be admitted that in all this there is no adequate proof of the pre-exilian existence of the synagogue; but is there any clearer proof of its existence in the Maccabæan or pre-Maccabæan times? It is said that the synagogue is presupposed in such places as Ezra 8: 15; Neh. 8: 2; 9: 1; Zech. 7: 5. But there are no presuppositions here essentially different from those of the pre-exilian passages. It is said that "prayer-places," the same thing as synagogues, are mentioned in 1

Mac. 3:46, and 3 Mac. 7:20. For the purposes of this argument, prayer-places and synagogues are identical; but *proseuche* is not used in this technical sense in the first of the two passages, and the second passage is too late to be of value in this argument. Schürer cites Ps. 74:8 in proof that there were synagogues in the Maccabæan times; but it is neither true that this psalm is Maccabæan, nor that it mentions synagogues.*

In fine, it would be difficult to prove that there were any synagogues, properly so called, till after the close of the Maccabæan struggle. The patriots of that struggle were defending Israelitish institutions against corruptive foreign tendencies. Pharisaism in all its forms was another part of the defence; the synagogues and schools were a third and far more influential form of defence for the same. The elements that entered into the synagogue as an institution had existed in Israel from the beginning; the synagogue itself we can trace back to a few generations before the Christian era. The best information in regard to it is to be found in the New Testament places that mention the synagogue, or the prayer-place, Jos. *Ant.* XIX. vi. 3; *Wars* II. xiv. 4-5; VII. iii. 3; *Life* 54; Philo *On the Virtuous being also Free* XII., and the places and works mentioned above.

The priesthood and temple. The Sadducees.—From Zerubbabel to Nehemiah, the succession to the highpriesthood seems to have gone by lineal descent. Soon after Nehemiah's death, there was an attempted interference by Persian officials,

* This statement, of course, contradicts the opinions of many. The psalm is not Maccabæan, for it treats of an occasion when the temple was mutilated, burned, and profanely leveled to the ground, not of a time when it was merely robbed and desecrated; of a time (ver. 9) when the failure of prophecy was a special privation, and not of a time when the absence of prophecy had become a part of the regular order of things. Historically, it is parallel to Lam. 2. It has nothing to say of synagogues, for there is no indication that *mo'dhe el* was ever used in the sense of synagogue. The expression properly means the set feasts of the Israelitish sacred year. As these centred in the temple, they are here said, figuratively, to have been burned in the burning of the temple. So the Septuagint translators seem to have understood it, for, dropping the figure, they translate "cause the set feasts of the Lord to cease from the land." If this psalm were Maccabæan, it would be nearly or quite as late as the Septuagint translation of it. In that case, if the writer were speaking about synagogues, the Greek translators could not possibly have misunderstood him.

Ant. XI. vii. 1, but it seems to have been a failure. Antiochus Epiphanes, however, was permitted to make and unmake highpriests; and a little later, Jonathan the Maccabee accepted the pontificate from a Syrian king. Then it was hereditary, for a little while, in the Asamonæan family, and then, practically, became a matter of Roman patronage, though the highpriest was ordinarily appointed from within a certain limited circle of priests. The New Testament writers speak of certain priests as "archpriests," and have no other title than archpriest for the highpriest himself.

Many of the priests sympathized with the Pharisees, and the Pharisees and lovers of the synagogue were enthusiastic supporters of the temple and the priesthood. But the priests were a hereditary aristocracy. Naturally, many of them were indisposed to accept the puritanism of the Pharisees. They fell back upon their prerogatives as descendants of Zadok. Those who took this position came to be known as Zadokites, that is to say, Sadducees.* The Pharisees were always men of zeal, and often men of learning, but they were often lacking in culture, and were bound by traditions. The Sadducees were apt to be men of culture. In many important matters, the doctrine of immortality, for example, the Pharisees zealously urged true doctrines, often basing them upon false reasons; while the Sadducees, denying the false reasons, also denied the true doctrines. It is a process that repeats itself everywhere. We may be sure that Pharisaism itself did not long exist without calling Sadduceeism into existence.

Messianic expectations.—Messianic doctrine is taught in the Old Testament almost exclusively in the form of the repeating, developing, and urging of Jehovah's peculiar promises to Abraham, repeated to Israel and to David. This promise was that the seed of Abraham, of Jacob, of David should exist and reign eternally, and should be His channel of blessing to all the nations of the earth. A doctrine so central as this, in the religion of ancient Israel, could not well be neglected among the Scribes and Pharisees, in the synagogues and the schools. And certainly it was not neglected. The

*This seems to me the most probable origin of the name Sadducee. For other views, see books of reference.

Jews of the generation to which Jesus came were certainly expecting some signal step in the fulfillment of the promise to the nation. When we say that they were looking for a personal Messiah, who would deliver them from the Roman yoke, the statement may be correct enough, provided we regard it as merely crude and rudimentary; but if we regard it as anything more, this statement contradicts the entire tenor of the New Testament. That for which Zechariah and Elizabeth and Mary and Simeon and John the Baptist and Nathaniel were looking, was mainly a spiritual Saviour for mankind, not merely a temporal Saviour for the Jews. They and their generation were evidently in doubt whether to expect one prophet, one Messiah, or a succession of prophets or Messiahs. But they were universally expecting some great fulfillment of Jehovah's promise to Israel, and this through the mission of some person or persons to be sent by Jehovah.

There are those who deny that traces of this expectation are found in the literature of the period before the advent. This is partly a matter of definition. Define the Messianic expectation as some have defined it, and you will find it difficult to trace, if you interpret language fairly; but with the definition just hinted at, the tracing is not difficult.

The literature of the period.—There is hardly room for dispute that the following works, among others, were written in Palestine between B. C. 168 and B. C. 48. First, Schürer recognizes the existence of contemporaneous written sources for the history of the Maccabæan times in 1 Mac., as well as a formal history of the pontificate of John Hyrcanus, 1 Mac. 16: 23, 24. The book of 1 Mac. itself, compiled from these sources, was written in Hebrew about 100 B. C. The epistle found in 2 Mac 1: 1–9 dates itself 125 B. C., and that found in 2 Mac. 1: 10–2: 18 dates itself 164 B. C. To the later Maccabæan period Schürer assigns the book of Judith. The original book of Enoch he attributes to a date from 133–100 B. C., regarding parts of the work as a little later. The Psalms of Solomon (see *Presbyterian Review* for Oct. 1883) Schürer dates after the taking of Jerusalem by Pompey, B. C. 63, and before 48 B. C. To these should be added the Hebrew sources of several of the other Apocrypha, provided

they had Hebrew sources, the possible written sources of the Pirke Aboth, and doubtless many works now lost.

During the same period, there was a large production of Hellenistic Jewish literature, mainly, though not exclusively, at Alexandria, partly in the form of original works, and partly in translations from the Hebrew. It is not always possible to distinguish the two, and some of the works to be presently mentioned may possibly be Palestinian instead of Hellenistic. Many of the Hellenistic writings, in the form in which we now have them, give no more definite indications of date than that they are pre-christian, and pre-suppose the Septuagint; hence the question whether certain of them are pre-maccabæan depends on the question when the Septuagint was completed.

To the period we are considering probably belongs the history of Joseph and Hyrcanus, son and grandson of Tobias, followed by Josephus in *Ant.* XII. iv.; the five books of Jason of Cyrene, 2 Mac. 2: 19 sq.; the book of 2 Mac. itself; the writings of Aristobulus; the Letter of Aristæus; the Wisdom of Solomon; the Greek Ezra; works now known only in fragments, by Demetrius, Eupolemus, Artapanus, Cleodemus or Malchus, the elder Philo, and many others; the translation of Enoch, which Schürer dates about 100 B. C.; translations of Ecclus., Tobit, and other Apocrypha.

There is further a strong disposition, among writers on the subject, to assign to this period a great number of other works. It is very commonly held that the completion of the Septuagint itself took place after the Maccabæan wars. To this period many assign the original writing of the books of Baruch, Tobit, 3 Maccabees, the Epistle of Jeremiah, the Prayer of Manasseh, the additions to Daniel and Esther, as well as the translating into Greek of such of these books as were not written in that language. The book of Daniel, Pss. 44, 74, 77, 79, 83, and a large number of other psalms, and less decidedly, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Zech. 9-14, and other parts of the Old Testament are also attributed to this period.

Concerning all this, I have only time to express my dissent from the opinion that any of the canonical writings originated

as late as the Maccabæan times. Parts of this problem have been considered in this series of articles. Apart from particular instances, there are certain general facts which have great weight.

1. The period is evidently overtaxed, if we hold it responsible for all the literature that reputable writers now assess upon it. In the nature of things, it cannot have been a period very productive in literature of a high type. It must be relieved of part of the assessment. But which part?

2. There is an exceedingly wide difference in literary character, both in thought and in style, between the canonical writings in question and the uncanonical. Compare, for example, the two apocalyptic books, Daniel and Enoch, or the two stories of Jewish women, Esther and Judith, or the alleged Maccabæan psalms with the psalm literature actually found in 1 Mac. 2: 7-13, 49-68; 3: 2-9, 50-54, etc. The Maccabæan imitations can hardly belong to the same period with the canonical originals.

3. The known writings of this period are full of Greek proper names, Greek dates, Greek war elephants, equipments, gymnasia, games, Greek ideas, objects, words. The absence of these marks from the canonical writings is strong evidence that they were produced before the Greek period. Fairly treated, there is no exception to this statement; for the few Greek terms in the book of Daniel are such as might naturally belong to the Persian or the Babylonian period.

4. Except the predictions in the book of Daniel, I think no one will assert that the canonical writings mention unambiguously any event, institution, or distinctive idea of the Maccabæan or post-Maccabæan times. All alleged instances of this sort are confessedly conjectural and doubtful.

5. The traditional evidence, so far as it goes, is to the effect that all the canonical writings of the Old Testament were produced as early as the lifetime of Nehemiah.

There is room for a more minute and thorough study of the Maccabæan and post-Maccabæan Jewish literature than has yet been made; and such study would be likely to throw light on several important problems of biblical science.